

I support media diversity

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

Reading that Bruce Springsteen "came out" by publicly supporting the Dixie Chicks got me wondering what the whole controversy has been about. I have no problem with what the Dixie Chicks said, or that they said it. I have no problem with Bill O'Reilly taking his time to criticize them. I have no problem with individuals boycotting the Dixie Chicks album, and, just to be clear-- I have no problem with fans of the Dixie Chicks boycotting individuals who boycott the Dixie Chicks album.

And then it hit me like a ton of bricks. This isn't about free speech; this is about the de-regulation of our radio waves. Of course the Dixie Chicks can say whatever they want to. The question is will we be allowed to hear them'?

In 1987 the FCC repealed the Fairness Doctrine, which required broadcasters to cover controversial issues in their community and to do so by offering balancing views. Now radio "news" is nothing more than a bathroom wall. All we hear now are right-wing parrots saying, "Saddamm Stinks", "G.W. is awesome!" etc. etc. etc...

Then, in 1996, Congress removed many of the ownership laws. In 1990 Clear Channel Worldwide Inc. owned 45 radio stations in 50 states. Now they own 1,200. As a result, Clear Channel and Cumulus Communications own almost every station in Toledo, except for a few religious stations and WGTE. Michael Powell, head of the FCC, and son of Colin, is in the process of more de-regulation that will allow for further consolidation. This means that if rogue elements of the Green Party buy Clear Channel, we'll have no other choice but to tune into Liberal crap all day long. Sigh... Do we Americans really want to live in a world where all of our news and music is dictated by a few biased elites?

Do I think we should regulate a radio stations right to play what they want? No.

I'm talking about regulating radio stations so that each one can only own a certain percentage of our airwaves. After Powells latest round of de-regulation, each corporation will be able to own 45% of the stations in a given area. This is unacceptable in America.

The benefits of regulation are evident. True free-market capitalism will exist because entry-level entrepreneurs can enter the market and earn their success by providing the public what they want. In a regulated market, if a station owner fails to provide the public what they want, then nobody will listen to him, advertisers won't pay him, and he will have to sell his station to an up-and-comer who has new ideas. This is free-market capitalism.

In our present, Fascist regime, Clear Channel doesn't have to give you what you want because you have no other choice but to tune into them. This seems inherently anti-American to me.

American freedom does not mean that a corporation is free to limit the choices and opportunities of individual citizens. According to the only existing dictionary definition: when business and government team up to consolidate their power at the expense of individual choice, while exuding belligerent nationalism; that is called, indeed, Fascism.

Not only is the economic American dream destroyed by such de-regulation, so is the fiber that binds a real democracy.

The market place of ideas, diversity of opinion, and, God forbid, journalists who report nothing but cold hard facts; these are tools that a functioning democracy requires. The quality of a democracy's leaders is determined by the information provided to the public. It's kind of like

the old adage, "you are what you eat"Â... if you're fed crap, wellÂ...
Do I want to regulate a businessman to keep him from becoming a
millionaire? No way!
Do I want to regulate a billionaire to keep him from becoming a King? You
bet I do. After all, I'm an American!